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2001HANOI02210 - CONFIDENTIAL

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ACTION EAP-00

INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	AID-00	AMAD-00	ACQ-00	CIAE-00	DINT-00
	DODE-00	SRPP-00	DS-00	EB-00	FBIE-00	VC-00	H-01
	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-00	L-00	VCE-00	AC-01	NSAE-00
	OIC-02	OMB-01	OPIC-01	PA-00	PM-00	PRS-00	ACE-00
	P-00	SP-00	IRM-00	STR-00	TRSE-00	USIE-00	PMB-00
	DSCC-00	PRM-01	DRL-02	G-00	NFAT-00	SAS-00	/009W

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FM AMEMBASSY HANOI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3889
INFO ASEAN COLLECTIVE
NSC WASHDC
USCINCPAC HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 HANOI 002210

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR EAP/BCLTV AND DRL

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/07/2011
TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PINS](#) [PGOV](#) [VM](#) [DPOL](#) [HUMANR](#)
SUBJECT: CONTINUED PRESSURE ON REFORM ACTIVISTS

REF: HANOI 02197

1. (U) CLASSIFIED BY A/DCM DAVID MONK, REASON 1.5 (D)
2. (C) SUMMARY. NO ADDITIONAL NEWS IS AVAILABLE ABOUT
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THE STATUS OF REFORM ACTIVISTS HOANG MINH CHINH AND PHAM QUE DUONG (REFTEL) EXCEPT THAT THEY ARE BELIEVED TO HAVE REPORTED AS REQUESTED TO THE HANOI POLICE STATION ON SEPTEMBER 6. POLICE APPARENTLY "INTERVIEWED" AT LEAST 19 ACTIVISTS ON SEPTEMBER 5 IN HANOI; TWO FROM HO CHI MINH CITY APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN SENT BACK THERE THE SAME EVENING. AUTHORITIES SEEM TO HAVE RETALIATED BY CUTTING OFF THE PHONE SERVICE OF AT LEAST SOME OF THESE ACTIVISTS, WHO HAVE CLAIMED PRIVATELY THESE MOVES MAY REPRESENT A SERIOUS ESCALATION OF PRESSURE AGAINST THEM. END SUMMARY.

2. (C) REFORM ACTIVIST NGUYEN THANH GIANG TOLD POLOFF ON SEPTEMBER 7 THAT HE STILL DID NOT KNOW THE CURRENT SITUATION OF FELLOW ACTIVISTS HOANG MINH CHINH AND PHAM QUE DUONG (REFTEL). GIANG SAID THAT HE AND HIS ASSOCIATES "DID NOT DARE" ANY MORE TO GO TO CHINH'S AND DUONG'S HOMES TO CHECK ON THEIR WELFARE, NOR COULD THEY CONTACT NOW THEM BY TELEPHONE. GIANG SAID THAT HE HAD MET CHINH'S WIFE AT A FUNERAL ON THE AFTERNOON OF SEPTEMBER 6, DURING WHICH SHE CONFIRMED THAT CHINH HAD RETURNED TO THE POLICE STATION THAT DAY FOR FURTHER "INTERVIEWS" BUT THAT CHINH WAS CONTINUING THE HUNGER STRIKE HE HAD BEGAN ON SEPTEMBER 5. GIANG ADDED THAT HE BELIEVED DUONG HAD ALSO RETURNED TO THE POLICE STATION ON SEPTEMBER 6.

3. (C) ACCORDING TO GIANG, POLICE IN HANOI "INTERVIEWED" A TOTAL OF 19 REFORM ACTIVISTS (INCLUDING HIMSELF) AT VARIOUS POLICE STATIONS ON SEPTEMBER 5. HE RECOUNTED HOW POLICE HAD VISITED SEVEN ACTIVISTS AT
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THEIR HOMES AND "INVITED" THEM (WITH APPROPRIATE LEGAL "INVITATION PAPERS") TO GO TO THE POLICE STATIONS "TO WORK WITH THEM." TEN OTHER ACTIVISTS WERE SIMILARLY "INVITED" TO GO TO POLICE STATIONS AFTER HAVING VISITED THE HOME OF EITHER CHINH OR DUONG ON SEPTEMBER 5. GIANG MAINTAINED THAT THE "INTERVIEWS" WERE PRIMARILY RELATED TO A REQUEST SENT BY REGISTERED MAIL TO THE GOVERNMENT ON SEPTEMBER 3 TO ESTABLISH AN ANTI-CORRUPTION NGO (REFTEL). HE ADDED THAT NOT ALL OF THE 19 HAD EVEN KNOWN ABOUT THIS INITIATIVE, ALTHOUGH ALL HAD AT SOME POINT BEEN ASSOCIATED WITH GIANG IN PROMOTING "DEMOCRATIC REFORM." THEY INCLUDE: HIMSELF, CHINH, DUONG, TRAN KHUE (WITH DUONG, CO-AUTHOR OF THE REQUEST), NGUYEN THI THANH XUAN, HOANG TIEN, NGUYEN DAU KINH, TRAN DUNG TIEN, TRAN BA, LE CHE QUANG, DAU QUY HA, DUOI HUY, NGUYEN THU, VU BINH, NGUYEN DOAI, DAO QUONG TIEN, V. THINH, TRAN DAI SON, AND DUOI SON.

4. (C) GIANG SAID THAT CO-AUTHOR KHUE AND XUAN (WHOM

GIANG DESCRIBED AS KHUE'S FRIEND AND A DEMOCRATIC REFORM SUPPORTER, BUT NOT INVOLVED WITH THE PROPOSAL) WERE SENT BACK TO HO CHI MINH CITY, WHERE THEY RESIDE, ON THE NIGHT OF SEPTEMBER 5. THEY HAD BEEN IN HANOI FOR THE PAST MONTH WHILE KHUE WORKED ON THE REQUEST. GIANG SAID THAT HE DID NOT KNOW WHAT HAD HAPPENED TO THESE TWO SINCE THEY LEFT HANOI.

15. (C) GIANG TOLD POLOFF THAT HE, ALL OF HIS FELLOW ACTIVISTS, AND THE OWNER OF THE HOME WHERE KHUE HAD STAYED, HAD THEIR HOME TELEPHONE SERVICE CUT. HIS OWN CELL PHONE SERVICE HAS ALSO BEEN CUT, AS POLOFF
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DISCOVERED ON SEPTEMBER 6. GIANG SAID THAT WHEN HE REALIZED THAT HIS CELL PHONE WAS NOT WORKING, HE BOUGHT A NEW SIM CARD ON THE MORNING OF SEPTEMBER 7 TO REACTIVATE HIS PHONE WITH A NEW AND DIFFERENT NUMBER. HE CLAIMED THAT, WITHIN TWO HOURS, THE NEW NUMBER HAD AGAIN STOPPED WORKING. GIANG MENTIONED THAT SOME OF HIS FELLOW ACTIVISTS ALSO HAVE CELL PHONES, BUT THAT HE DOES NOT YET KNOW IF THEIRS ARE STILL IN SERVICE.

16. (C) GIANG OPINED THAT THE "INTERVIEWS" AND TELEPHONE DISRUPTIONS ARE THE STRONGEST ACTION THE SRV HAS TAKEN AGAINST DEMOCRACY REFORMERS IN SOME TIME. HE SAID THAT HE BELIEVES THAT THIS ACTION MAY BE A WARNING BY THE REMAINING "HARD-LINE" LEADERSHIP TO NONG DUC MANH AND OTHER NEW LEADERS. ALTERNATIVELY, GIANG HYPOTHESIZED, SINCE HE AND HIS FELLOW ACTIVISTS PROPOSE SETTING UP AN ORGANIZATION TO FIGHT CORRUPTION, THOSE WITHIN THE LEADERSHIP OF WHATEVER POLITICAL TENDENCY WHO BENEFIT FROM CORRUPTION WOULD OPPOSE SUCH EFFORTS. EITHER WAY, GIANG GUESSED, "THE PEOPLE" WOULD BE QUITE UPSET IF THEY LEARNED ABOUT THE POLICE REACTION TO THIS PROPOSAL TO SET UP AN ANTI-CORRUPTION NGO, THUS MAKING IT MORE DIFFICULT FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO CONTINUE TO GOVERN.

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17. (U) ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS, THE FOREIGN MINISTRY SPOKESPERSON ON SEPTEMBER 6 DENIED THAT ANY ARRESTS HAD TAKEN PLACE AGAINST INDIVIDUALS ATTEMPTING TO ESTABLISH AN ANTI-CORRUPTION NGO.
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18. (C) IN A SEPARATE MEETING ON SEPTEMBER 7 (SEPTEL), THE CHAIRMAN OF THE VIETNAM LAWYERS' ASSOCIATION CONFIRMED TO POL/C AND POLOFF THAT, IN LEGAL PRINCIPLE, VIETNAMESE CITIZENS CLEARLY HAVE THE RIGHT TO SET UP AN ASSOCIATION TO FIGHT CORRUPTION OR UNDERTAKE OTHER ACTIVITIES NOT PROHIBITED BY LAW. HE CLAIMED TO HAVE NO KNOWLEDGE OF THIS NEW INITIATIVE OR POLICE REACTION.

19. (C) COMMENT. GIANG'S DESCRIPTION OF THE SEVERITY OF THIS ROUND OF ACTIONS MAY BE INFLUENCED BY HIS OWN INVOLVEMENT. INASMUCH AS EMBASSY CAN DETERMINE, POLICE REACTION TO THIS INITIATIVE, WHILE UNHELPFUL, HAS NOT BEEN NOTABLY HEAVY-HANDED AND MAY NOT EVEN LEAD TO ACTUAL ARRESTS OR IMPRISONMENT -- AT LEAST, IN THE ABSENCE OF FURTHER PERCEIVED PROVOCATIONS. END COMMENT
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